

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY: ARA:GCHAFIN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KINGSTON PRIORITY

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FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS

FOL REPEAT OF CARACAS 8773 TO SECSTATE INFO PORT OF SPAIN CURACAO

AUG 22

QTE:

UNCLAS CARACAS 8773

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG PINT VE

SUBJ: VENEZUELAN CONGRESS PASSES OIL NATIONALIZATION BILL

REF: CARACAS 8548

1. THE VENEZUELAN CONGRESS AUGUST 21 PASSED AND SENT TO PRESIDENT PEREZ FOR HIS SIGNATURE THE BILL TO NATIONALIZE THE VENEZUELAN PETROLEUM INDUSTRY. AFTER THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES VOTED ARTICLE BY ARTICLE TO APPROVE THE SENATE'S MODIFICATIONS TO THE BILL (REFTEL), CHAMBER PRESIDENT OSWALDO ALVAREZ PAZ DECLARED THE BILL AS A WHOLE APPROVED AT 9:30 PM.

2. DURING THE FINAL 3-1/2 HOUR SESSION, DEPUTIES ARTURO HERNANDEZ GRISANTI OF THE GOVERNING AD PARTY AND ABDON VIVAS TERAN OF COPEI, THE MAIN OPPOSITION PARTY, TRADED CLAIMS AS TO WHICH OF THEIR PARTIES HAD DONE THE MOST TO ADVANCE OIL
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NATIONALIZATION. HERNANDEZ, TAKING PART IN THE DEBATE FOR THE

FIRST TIME AFTER A LENGTHY ABSENCE FOR SURGERY, EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT VENEZUELA WILL OVERCOME PROBLEMS IN THE INDUSTRY FOLLOWING NATIONALIZATION. "VENEZUELA HAS THE HUMAN RESOURCES, IT HAS THE ECONOMIC BASE, AND IT HAS THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP," HERNANDEZ DECLARED. VIVAS AFFIRMED COPEI'S SUPPORT FOR NATIONALIZATION DESPITE RESERVATIONS REGARDING THE DECEMBER 31 DATE FOR THE ABROGATION OF THE OIL COMPANIES' CONCESSIONS AND FUTURE MIXED ENTERPRISES. HE CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO PUT ASIDE PARTISANSHIP AND TO CARRY OUT NATIONALIZATION IN THE "MOST VENEZUELAN MANNER POSSIBLE."

3. AS OTHER SPEAKERS RESTATED THEIR PARTIES' POSITIONS WITH RESPECT TO NATIONALIZATION, MANY DEPUTIES ROAMED THE CHAMBER AND READ NEWSPAPERS IN AN EFFERT TO THWART BOREDOM. AFTER ALVAREZ DECLARED THE BILL APPROVED, AD, COPEI AND URB DEPUTIES STOOD AND APPLAUDED WHILE SOCIALIST DEPUTIES (MEP, MAS, PCV AND MIR) REFRAINED FROM EXPRESSING ANY JUBILATION AT THE BILL'S PASSAGE.

4. THE CONGRESS THUS CONCLUDED THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS WHICH BEGAN FIVE MONTHS AGO. PRESIDENT PEREZ IS SCHEDULED TO SIGN THE BILL NEXT WEEK DURING A PUBLIC CEREMONY AT THE CAPITOL. SHLAUDEMAN UNQTE MAW

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